

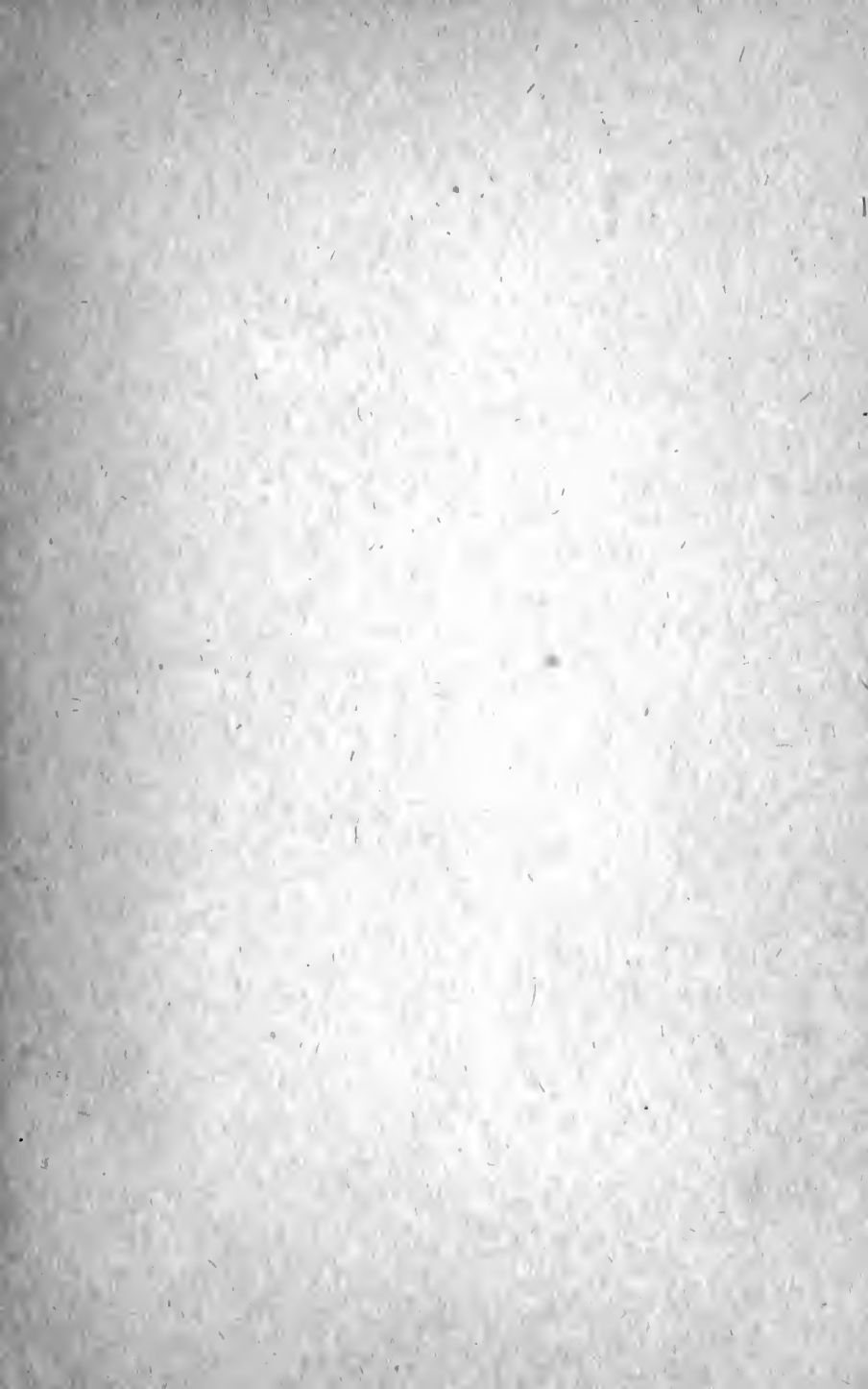
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ROBERT BURNS,
COLONEL WESTNEDGE,
AND
WAIFAGE.

BY
E. M. IRISH.

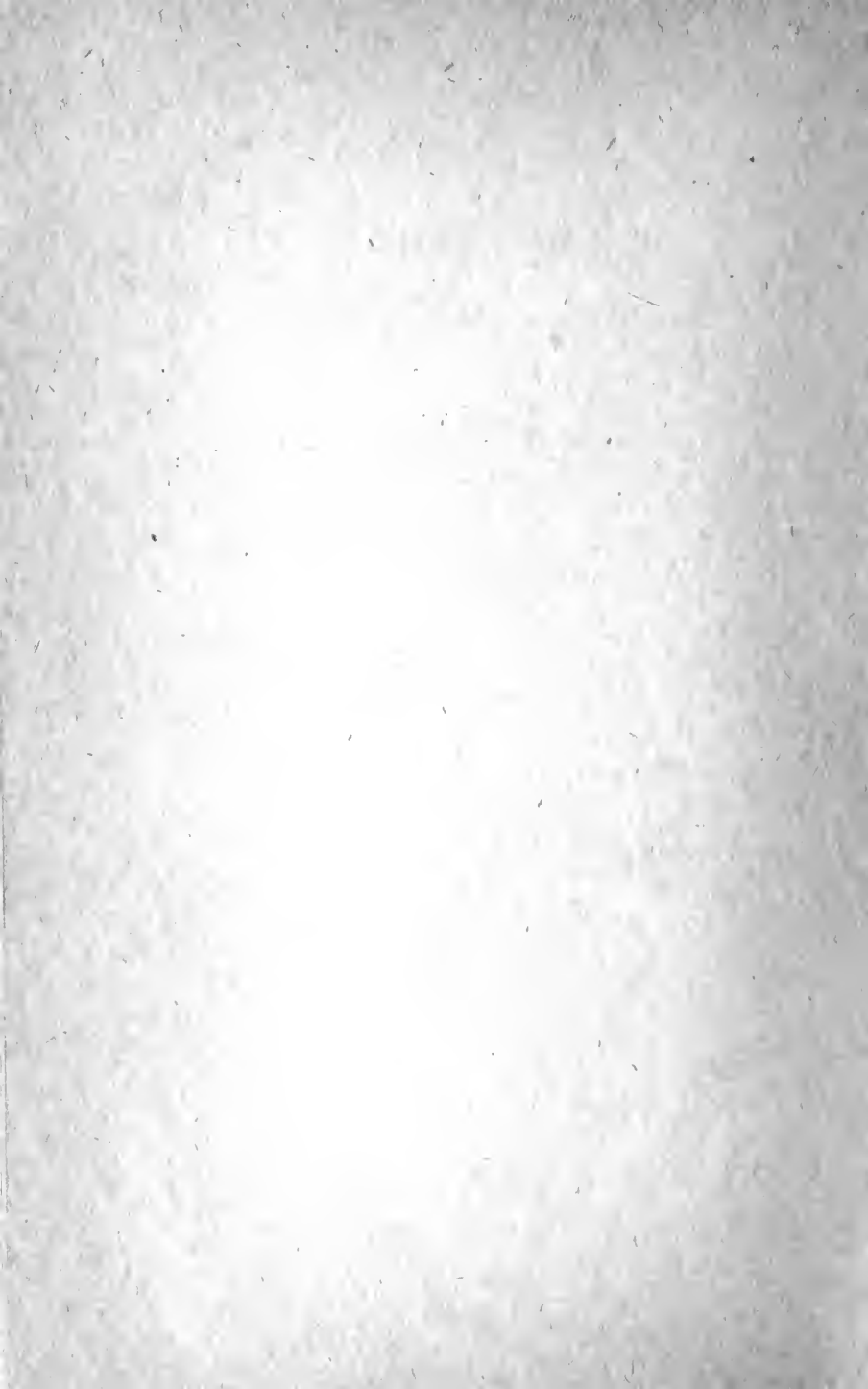


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ROBERT BURNS

Mr. Toastmaster;—Ladies and Gentlemen;—

I have received a very kind invitation to come to this banquet to-night:—It was to talk to the emigrant exiles of Scotland about Robert Burns.

So much has been said of him in the last hundred years that Scotchmen as well as others have the Burns habit. People and critics say over and over:—what a poet Burns was, and what a pity he had so many faults as a man.

Now it is a universal custom for people when they meet their friends in good weather, to tell them what a pleasant day it is—only it looks like rain after a little.

This is because such a day is one of nature's richest gifts:—common as it is we cannot help talking about it.

But suppose we had lived in some icy region of the pole, and had never seen a spring morning:—then a ship-load of us were suddenly landed in one of earth's fertile valleys.

We should walk in green meadows—or through the blooming heather. For the first time we should see the sunny mist drift from the dew, and the dawn turning Westward over forest lake and river.

We should listen to the skylark's song:—see buds and flowers and bloomage of orchards. We should breathe the balsam of the spring.

(Delivered before the Burns Society of Kalamazoo, Jan. 25, 1919, and Jan. 27, 1920.)

The daylight would dally with the gloaming till the buttons of the stars were pressed. Then instead of a gliter on the ice-pack, we should see the curfew planet blink—and watch the Maytime rising of the Pleiades.

If through all these moving pictures we saw man and maid a-journey—now in joy and then in trouble:—how could we find language to tell each other what a wonderful day it was?

Now suppose we were all together just as we are to-night—only we had never heard of Robert Burns.

The toastmaster might arise and say we had with us a wandering minstrel, who would tell us of lad and lass and nature:—tell us of sunlight and shadow and star-shine, as he saw it in Bonny Scotland over a hundred years ago;—and tell it in language fresh with the vernal beauty of his own song.

Then the astral of a plow-boy would step down to the table. His great dark eyes would look out at us from the old-time falling clusters of his hair:—and the genius of Robert Burns would dawn on us, as once it dawned on that rugged country of the Northland.

He would tell us in the rich broguey rhythm of the lowlands, about Tam O' Shanter's rolic tilt with imps and witches:—how he rode his good gray Maggie to the cabaret from 'Tunket--the Devil's dance at Alloway's auld haunted kirk. The bagpiper who led the orchestra you will remember, had a hyphenated foot, and a Nick in his name. But he was naturalized,—and Scotland was just like home to him.

If the old preachers were right,—Nick had quite a clan of Scotchmen among his summer boarders, too.

Then after the devil's toe-spinner—his *premiere danseuse*—had flown away with poor Maggie's tail,—the music would play lower on the side:—the spirits of evil

would be laid with the story of the Cotter's Saturday Night, and the white haired father's prayer.

He would tell us of sunny braes of heather and dark mountain tarns:—of the mavis and the laverock's song:—of limping hare and panicky field mouse. We should hear of Ben Lomond and the Lowlands:—of Bonny Doon and Highland Mary.

Through his song would slide the music of rivers and rocky burns:—the murmur of Afton:—the youth of the hill-land Clyde:—the gurgle of the hermit Ayr. He would make us see the clear wind of Devon, and the drumly Logan water;—and hear the surging of the stormy Forth.

Then our thoughts of the day:—of sunny sky and twinkling night:—of home and happy lovers, would have found a voice.

Now the spirit of Robert Burns walks the earth to-day. It comes with his song to banquet and ingle-side. It tells the story of heart and home—of love and memory—to boy and girl and man and woman.

While we read,—some vagabond fiddler viols on between the rhymes. He stole his trick where the birds and the rivers found tunes; and then wised the kitten-string's guile about the tavern taps.

Robert Burns was a poet: but if that were all, we should not remember him.

Songs are sung and we listen. Tomorrow they grow old and are forgotten. They die in the silence of the past

Only a few send their carillons out with music time cannot hush.

If we would know why a song has come to live, and why Burns is not forgotten,—we must look deeper.

This plow-boy was born in Scotland one hundred and sixty years ago to-night.

He has been accused of being a common drunkard:—of mocking religion and the church:—of using language that was unco plain;—and of being a free lance of Lover's Lane.

Even his admirers are wont to apologize for what they call his unhappy failings.

The most we know about these angles in his story,—he tells us by writing himself into his poems.

He wrote from his own observation and his own experience and imagination; and he dared to think out loud. Most of the great cloud of poets write echoes from what they have read in books that other poets have written. Some of them try to echo Burns. Real poetry doesn't come from books. It sometimes gets into them.

Oliver Wendell Holmes focused Burns in one line when he spoke of

“His wasteful self surrender.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson said that:—

“Not Latimer nor Luther struck more telling blows against false theology than this brave singer. The Confession of Augsburg, the Declaration of Independence, the French Rights of Man, and the Marseillaise, are not more weighty documents in the history of freedom than the songs of Burns.”

But do you suppose that any man could have written Tam O' Shanter and the Jolly Beggars:—poems that ruffle the river of melody with Minnehaha rapids:—do you think any one could have written them who had never been drunk himself? And not only that,—but been out with the boys when the other fellows were full too?

Burns is his own confessor. He seems to own up to nearly all the faults he had time to think of.

Other noted men of his time got drunk at their clubs, and at private parties. They were taken care of by their valets and trundled quietly home in their carriages and put to bed.

If Burns dropped into a country tavern in the evening—to get a cock-crow highball—and walk home to breakfast:—people who were eager to believe, were sure that Rab the Rhymer—who wrote the drinking songs—had been on a corking rouse.

It was not much for a Scotchman to get full in those days.

To-day, if he wanted to tap a jag-juice tree and draw a noggin of cussaline sap,—he would'nt always know where the sugar-bush was.

Burns is often publicly drunk in his own poems and fesses up like Topsy to things he never did.

Nance Tinnock who kept the tavern at Mauchline complained that he never drank three half pints in her house:—"Whatever he might say in his lying poems."

But let us think for a minute. He lived only thirty-seven and a half years. He did his own work on small farms, and helped out his income by being a guager. Think of measuring all the liquor the Scotchmen of ten parishes drank.

He had to work long days the most of his life:—yet

he found time to write nearly six hundred poems. Besides these he re-wrote and improved more than a hundred old Scotch songs. The world will not let them die.

Now where did he find the over-time to be a drunkard?

Napoleon said that history is an agreed fable. If a man is talked about at all in a small town, almost everything people say is tinged with fable. Dame Rumor never had a good reputation for truth and veracity.

If Burns could do the life work he did, and keep his mental edge while full of Scotch Whiskey:—then there must be something in the advice Martin Luther once gave to a young theological student. He came to him in a brain fog because he could not reconcile the doctrine of free will and predestination. Luther told him to go and get good and drunk.

Moreover a Scotch tavern was not thought to be a very bad place.

It was often kept by somebody like,

“Lady Onlie, honest Lucky,
Who brewed guid ale at shore of Bucky.”

There is a yarn about an old Scotch couple who got into a quarrel one evening at their own ingle-gleed—fire-side:—the kind of domestic felicity they called in the highlands,—having a smoky chimney.

Finally the good wife said:—“I wish I was through and up in Heaven.”

The man said:—“I wish I was down at the tavern with the boys.”

She said:—“That’s just like you,—you always did want the best of everything.”

If Burns had lived fifty years earlier, he would not have written much about the kirk.

Because if he had started in, there would have been nothing left of him.

It was a sin of itself to write poetry. He would have been excommunicated, and his own mother could not have sheltered him.

Today, no one but some student of history—some midnight prowler in musty alchoves of old libraries—could restore the fossil imps of Scotland's fierce theology in the 17th Century.

In the time of Burns it was physically safe to be a heretic, but not socially safe. The shadow of the old regime still clouded intellectual liberty.

Only instead of the old gloom,—they called it the "Auld Light."

In the 17th century the clergy had made the people believe that they held the keys of life and death:—of Heaven and Hell.

They could cause people to die when they willed, and send them where they belonged.

It was a sin to laugh out loud on week days, and to smile on Sunday.

God was a wizard of vengeance who had doomed all but the few elect to an eternal hell from the beginning of time.

This Hell wasn't the kind of sulphur spring where you go just to mope, and get toned up with a course of the blues—and then resign.

The miserable sinners were slung up by their tongues and sizzled in incandescent brimstone. It smelt like fuming sin.

Short sermons about the bottomless pit were from two, up to five hours long; and often the preaching was

done by relays, and the people had to take it all day—no eight hour day at that.

Infant damnation was one of their most cheerful hobbies.

The devil was out all the time with his staff of imps. They could hear him in the night bellowing like a bull.

Sometimes he made up as a preacher; and sprung secular antics to queer the clergy.

This however was a blessing in disguise to the preachers:—for if they did fall for one of his temptations—and got caught—the devil himself had to stand for it.

This was fair enough to Satan. Turn-about is fair play; and theology was advertising his resort and sending him trade. He challenged publicity.

Old cloven foot Clutie used to carry people away by their hair.

The saints who were saved, were allowed to lean over the battlements of Heaven and look on at the goat barbecue.

They enjoyed the prospect of this movie show immensely.

Also the pleasant howlings of their damned old neighbors would help to make Heaven joyous.

Even mothers were to grow so saintly as to feel a holy joy at seeing their wicked babies fried in the Devil's skillet. Wasn't it all the mess of that horrid Eve anyway?

The Spanish inquisition alone equalled that era of superstition.

Its hypocrisy was beyond belief.

In the time of Burns it still retained a tyranny over the mind.

It was this theology that he trimmed.

Instead of being a scoffer at religion, he turned out to be a reformer of the church, and did much to make it temperate.

In his time in Scotland, when the sacrament was administered, it was the custom to put up a tent outside the meeting-house and have preaching throughout the day. Sermons were roared out, with prayers that Burns said were "Three miles long."

The people young and old came from all the country round to attend these—"Holy Fairs"—as they were called.

They brought lunches of bread and cheese and entertained each other.

Ale and whiskey flowed like the Doon in Tam O' Shanter.

A Scotch lassie was supposed to take a nice lunch along and invite a "Billie", to pair off with her. A girl that couldn't take the cheese, and a lad that didn't get a lass was in hard luck.

An employer was considered real Scotch mean, who wouldn't let a poor girl who worked out, draw on the larder for a can of bait to catch a laddie with.

The scandals and drunkenness at these sacred sheep-folds, would make an old fashioned camp meeting blush carnation.

At Mauchline the tent was in the church yard, and had a back entrance that led to Nance Tinnock's tavern.

It wasn't any trouble to get a congregation to turn out. And they took up a good collection at the portal flap.

A tent in the daytime without modern electrics, had but "Dim religious light." It was almost as snug for the boys and girls as a back parlor with the gas turned down.

On a cloudy day the tent would be as full of little devils as Kirk Alloway was when Tam saw it.

Then Burns wrote his "Holy Fair", and drew the show as it was.

He finished with an envoy that pictured the consequences with a realism Gustave Dore and Hogarth would have envied.

Three hundred years before,—Leonardo Da Vinci painted his picture of the "Last Supper" on the convent wall at Milan.

Long afterwards a squadron of Napoleon's cavalry stabled in the convent,—and the cinocolo was marred with the rude retouch of war.

Strange travesties;—the grotesque carnival by the banks of Ayr, and the hallowed fresco from the renaissance of Italy. One with the aroma of cheese and whiskey for incense,—and the medieval marvel pelted with the stable middens:—the Galilean's picture over the mangers smutted by the graceless troopers.

Of the flock that went home at night across the moors,—the poem runs:—

"There's some are full of love divine,
There's some are full of brandy."

It ends with some words you can find in a Scotch glossary. But my dears you mustn't look them up.

Burns is said to have recited this poem to the crowd over at Nancy's reception.

It edified them more than the limbo gas and depth bombs exploding in the tent across the way.

They saw a reel of themselves taken by a vivid camera.

He had said nothing irreverent about the sacrament itself.

But the kirk was in an uproar, and gave him a ticket marked—good for a sulphur bath.

The result was that these annual reunions of saints and sinners were sent through the laundry.

A way was found to commemorate the Lord's supper without getting drunk and hugging the girls.

"The Holy Fair" was the best sermon on Scotland's Merry Hell:—on religion and temperance and sex morality, preached in that generation.

The preacher was full of his subject, and talking to fellow sinners.

Burns tells us more in his poems that is said to reflect on his morality.

Again he is his own confessor.

In one of Guy De Maupassant's stories, a Paris lover went at midnight to the cemetery of Peer La Chaise—the Westminster Abbey of France:—or dreamed that he did. There he read the epitaphs, the flattery of friends had traced on the marbles.

Then it seemed to him that all the ghostly populace of that hillside arbor, rose up and re-wrote on their monuments in luminous letters,—the truth about themselves.

If everyone in this room to-night were to write the secret history of their lives—and print it:—or if the stenographer of the recording angel were called before the grand jury with her minutes:—how many of us would be left to cast stones at the memory of Burns?

His songs are his monument, and into them he has written in spirit fire his honest epitaph.

But many people who read them, do so with the gossip idea of the righteous old lady. She hoped to be re-

warded with a front seat at the day of judgment where she could listen comfortably to everybody's secrets;—and then go out calling in Heaven and talk things over.

Ithuriel must have been Burns' good angel and loaned him the frog-spear he frisked the toad with—

“Lang Syne in Eden's bonny yard.”

The false is unmasked and the real shines out in these poems. *There!*

The more I think it over this Ithuriel touch is correct. Besides;—it sounds literary and Miltonic.

Satan hops out so often in Burns and looks so devilish natural.

There is the same tingle of electric steel that flicked off his toadskin domino in the orchard. There he was:—reciting Burns to Eve, and making her think she had to get some kilts for the family. This was when little Eva was quite young too.

Burns wrote about a mouse, a rabbit and a sheep,—also a calf and a louse;—but a toad—never.

His devil wears full evening dress—the spike-tail and some horns, and he puts his second best foot forward.

It is a good honest Scotch Devil that wouldn't play toad if it could—not when the spear was in sight.

The experience Burns wrote from was genuine—the kind that comes to the everyday life of man and woman—not the sort that epitaphs relate.

Benvenuto Cellini wrote an autobiography that is one of the wonders of literature.

If he was half as tough as he made himself out to be

(which I doubt),—he was the bad man of Italy. Yet I suppose he was not worse than the men about him who masked their lives.

Saul of Tarsus claimed to be "Chief of Sinners."

He doubtless intended this in the poetical sense,—not as a plea of guilty at the bar of biography.

Goethe wrote of poets:—

"None in prose confess an error,
But we do so void of terror
In the Muses' silent groves."

John G. Whittier—the Quaker poet of New England—wrote a very pretty poem about Burns. But in it he regrets and apologizes.

He speaks of

"The evil strain"
"The discord and the staining."
"The ribald line"
"While falls the shade between
the erring one and Heaven."

John G. Whittier was a good man. But he could not understand Burns. Of course not. He never took a drink of Scotch whiskey:—never kissed a pretty girl:—never had a good time in his life.

He was a nice lady-like old bachelor who needed a shock absorber. So he made his jingle and gave us a naughty little musical Burns,—who should be forgiven, because some of his poems were really sweet and proper.

If you would know the difference between the two men:—open Whittier's book. Reading the rhymes is like taking a quiet buggy ride behind a docile old gelding.

You will not be run away with, nor tipped over.
You shall not get a jolt.

Take up Burns and you open a nature's wonder book. You might as well try to harness a wild stag of the Highlands—like the one the Knight of Snowdown steep-le-chased in Lock Kathrine's rocky glens.

The black St. Hubert hounds were bushed:—his gallant gray fell dead:—Fritz James himself was love-struck —(He was a Scotchman):—but the stag is there yet—where Walter Scott left him.

All your neat bundles of conventionality will be smashed to flinders, and kicked down the mountain passes.

If Burns had been given Whittier's chance at slavery,—he would not have written decorous moral essays in rhyme. The world would have roared slavery down when it read the Holy Willie stuff he would have pulled.

Yet in those lines, Whittier probably expresses the popular opinion of Burns:—that is among those who think they could have improved nature's handiwork if they had the making of him:—the ones who would grade Mt. Blanc down to a city park,—and tame a splendid wild animal like Bobby in its zoo.

He tries to reach up to Burns' shoulder and pat him on the back.

It is the conventional way of looking at Burns. But conventional spectacles never focus well. The lenses are never acromatic. False colors and reflected lights tinge and distort the image.

Through them we cannot see the honest manhood.

We miss the glint of the springy whinyard that pinked the joints of hypocrisy's armor.

We lose sight of the bold strokes that fell on religion's tyranny.

Nor do we see the brave boy father.

And then we lose sight of the inspiration he was to others.

Over a hundred years ago, in a log cabin in an American wilderness,—another rugged independent boy was born.

He read by pitch-pine candle power, and the hearth-log's fitful glow. Only here and there could he find a book. But one of them was the poems of Burns. It had an influence over him that helped to shape his life and mould his gift of deep poetic language.

The heart of Scotland spoke to the child of the Western clearing; and he grew up another of nature's men,—to stand for truth and right and liberty.

The one who spoke was Robert Burns.

The one who read was Abraham Lincoln.

It would have been worth something to the Scotch plow-boy if he could have known in his lifetime that his song was to be inspiration to another boy poor as himself,—who was to become the greatest president in the history of republican liberty.

But Burns is criticized for some of his love songs.

Civilization brings boy and girl, and man and woman together.

But it cannot still the tide that nature set a-throb in their arteries.

Civilization is garrulous as a magpie mob about trusting the people. But it does it with cash registers and secret ballots—and non-refillable Scotch Whiskey bottles.

Of all things that it does not trust,—is love itself.

It loads it with conventional chains, and tries to make it walk in fetters.

These chains never were strong enough to hold. They are continually broken. Then society lets the man go free and damns the girl and brands the offspring. Down in our hearts we all know this is wrong.

Unmarried motherhood rocked the cradles of Homer and Boccaccio;—of Leonardo Da Vinci, and Alexander Hamilton. Their laurels will not fade.

There is a long line of others whose names the world has placed in its treasury. A longer line has been banished to social waifdom.

This so called civilization has made a holy impulse that was meant to summon a spirit from the deeps,—the foxy joke of the centuries—and their dreary tragedy.

As those mothers—over whose marriage no ritual was ever chanted—sang their lonely lullabys:—Shakespeare and Burns and Hawthorne saw the light that never faileth—the mystery light the infinite made to dawn in the mother eyes before a ritual was ever dreamed of.

Walter Scott saw it shining when he wrote the story of Effie Deans in the Heart of Mid Lothian.

It looks out through the pathos of Bonny Doon. In some of Burns' other poems it fires with a world defiant glance—like a tigress at bay with her kitten.

But civilization came—with the parish penance stool and the scarlet letter.

Now if Burns were here to-night:—would you look into the daring eyes of Scotland's troubador, and quote that pious cant of Whittier's? Would you say:—you wrote some pretty rhymes:—but you ought to be ashamed,—because you made some songs to the brave mothers of the age's splendid wastrels?

If a higher civilization ever dawns on this rude barbarian planet:—if charity of the heart ever means what the angels sang over the manger of Bethlehem:—no one

of Nature's mothers will sit as an out-cast beside her cradle.

She who guards the slumber of an exile—washed ashore from tides of the ether—should find a Red Cross in all the world.

As evolution turns the mill-wheel of the gods, it sometimes gives us a type of immortal youth.

Right here it seems as if a small lantern balloon should be cut loose. One lit with a classical jack would come handy with the spear.

O yes! The type of course comes fresh from primeval woodlands, where Goat-foot Pan—the dean of bagpipers—played to fauns and satyrs:—piped them till the jocund earth went reeling underfoot and kicked like the floor at a Highland fling.

Along with them, forest nymphs in artless innocence romped—*sans* rompers—a-down the glades of Arcady

This is proved beyond question by some of the finest paintings in the garner of art.

We feel sure they were done from life.

Now a rough *b-u-r-r-r* grew thick in the Lowlands—the Lallands—that at one time was not well understood. But it seemed it could be fashioned into rustic Pan-pipes that tuned an unblown melody in their fluty chanter.

And skippers were ready for the fandango. There were fauns and stayrs that could dance on cloven hoofs. Besides the notch-foot drolls from Hades,—these were nags and calves and even sheep. For memory grieves in elegy over poor Mailie—the matron ewe. It recalls the sweet maternal heart that blessed onto her children the priceless legacy of virtue.

For elves,—came bunnies with long silky ears, and a field mouse.

This was no happy home gimlet-eye, that expects to have its cheese toasted—and then served with a kick in it.

The meadow-mouse has a patrician air and is beautiful. The ladies need not get on a chair when they see one. If it wants to hide—it retires in a refined way into an underground ambush.

For nymphs there were bonny Jeans and Anna with the golden hair. There was Nannie, who wasn't away all the time;—and then Clarindas and Peggies and Phillis and Chloris. Eppie Macnab was "Down in the yard a-kissin the Laird," and Tibbie Dunbar came in her coatie.

They were not all country lassies.

When the high-kick was on the lawn,—Jenny Gordon—Castle Gordon's frolic Duchess took the bannock.

Jenny

"kilted up her kirtle weel
To show her bonny cutes so small,
And walloped about the reel
The lightest louser o' them all."

Of shepherd wags there were plenty:—Duncan Gray and Davie, and Jumpin John and Jockie.

There was Willie Wastle whose wife was a joke with a clapper tongue.

The joke is an old one. Other fellows have heard it.

Holy Willie was also a goat—the best one ever. But this capricorn—like all Willie-goats—is kind o' smelly.

What flingers to spin the Maypole dizzy!

The piper who blew the goblin music for the reels and waltzes was a plow-boy who made the glens of Ayr a wild sweet Arcady.

So far as I know Burns is the only minstrel of the people, who with nature's abandon has played this Lang-Syne Lyriad down the years and held the stage.

What other poet is given a reception every year?

Tom Moore wrote verses he tried to suppress. They were artificial attempts to pose as a witty rake.

But an expurgated edition of Burns would not go on the market. People know the difference between Arcady and Walt Whitman.

If Burns steps over the bound of conventionality, it is the call of the wild—the mating of the skylark in the purple heather.

It drops down from the blue

“and thinks nae shame
To woo his bonny lassie
When the kye comes hame.”

Scotland's laverock you shall not cage:—

“His lay is in Heaven;
His love is on earth.”

If Emerson could say Burns struck blows like those of Latimer and Luther against the dismal theology of Scotland:—so may we say, that he sang the hope songs of mortals for the wayfarer and the out-cast.

It is easy to say that Burns wrote many a jingle that is not poetry. So have all the poets. A poet like other artists is known by his best efforts—not by his worst. It is as if we should go to hear a great pianist like Paderewski play. We should listen spellbound to the magian touch on the keys. Then a phonograph might be brought in, and we compelled to hear the records of his early piano practice and crude experiments.

We often listen to the Burns' victrola.

"The very sweepings of his desk," were gathered up after his death and published.

Besides the old Scotch songs that he revised, the world has 562 poems that he wrote—perhaps a few more. In his life-time he published and edited only 88 of them.

He has been called unthrifty for not getting the other 474 on the market.

Unthrifty he was no doubt. When the poet's saddle horse has to work for its board,—the wings are always getting snarled with the belly-band.

But the evident reason why he did not publish,—is that a poem is generally an evolution that goes through many stages from crude to finish.

There were writings he had not finished and put in shape for publication.

He threw off careless rhymes and passed them out to friends, which he never intended to publish.

Quite a number of poems are attributed to him which he never wrote.

We do not have a Burns' book as we have a Tennyson—revised and polished by a long-lived author.

If he had lived, much would have been suppressed and much changed.

It is the tarrying re-touch of the artist's burin that cunnings a marble of Praxitiles—an easel of Leonardo;—or a page where the Linden bees of Virgil tree.

So of the rhymers' song-pad.

Burns wrote;—"I glower and spell."

The impromptu rhymes are muffled, by him who knows the flavor of the ripened song.

When we come to his letters:—The British Islands have been swept for scraps of paper. Thoughtless letters

—some of them written when he was a boy—were bought up and published.

Many of them are garbled. Many indicate only the trouble or whim of the moment.

Writers on Burns often show a guileless innocence of satire and humor when they construe some of the passages literally, and sort out trifles for sermon texts.

They are like a skipper who would steer by floating islands and meteors, instead of by rocky headlands and the stars.

Who could pass the ordeal of having every letter he ever wrote put in print and discussed by people who could not—would not—understand.

Who would care to receive friendly letters written to be published?

Skilled anatomists dissect men's bodies after death.

Writers with little knowledge of human nature have carved the heart of Burns with dull scalpels.

But then! One must have faith to read biography—and charity. As for hope:—leave it all behind—ye who are likely to get caught in a write-up.

If some sybil would burn the music lessons of all the poets—and leave us their successes—we could save some valuable paper in these times.

There would be no striking printers—only stricken poets.

Put where are the magi of literature wise enough to be trusted? We differ among ourselves, and each generation differs, as to what is best and worst.

The seers of the future will think they know more than all the past.

If we took up a newspaper or a magazine, and saw a funny caricature from an artist's pencil,—one that

turned like a search light on to some error of today :—We should all recognize it as a caricature. We should realize its force. No one would say that the picture was wrong because it was not true. The drawing would show the truth like a microscope by magnifying some part of the subject.

But people read Burns and Dickens and do not realize that they are continually drawing caricatures.

They find fault with both these authors. And yet the prose author the people read the most is Dickens,—and the poet they know the best is Burns. Many know Burns who never read one of his poems. Sayings and snatches of his songs pass in everyday conversation often without a thought of where they came from.

The ideas and plans of his poems have been worked over by minor rhymesters with many a scrannel note.

In the war of the rebellion, funny cartoons by Thomas Nast were worth regiments to the Union cause.

The cartoonists of today have been equal to fresh army corps for the allies.

Selfish wrong and hypocrisy fell before the novels of Dickens and the poems of Burns.

No one with a classical education that isolated him from everyday life, and the everyday thought and talk of the people, could have written these poems. No one who was not a wine bibber and a friend of publicans and sinners could have written them.

The Sunday School teacher asked little Mayme what we must first do in order to have our sins forgiven. Mayme said :—“We must first sin.”

A man who has been a good executive sinner himself, is all the better at helping other people.

Burns had sympathy for those who shared his lot of toil. He had the hatred of canting hypocrisy, and the independence to speak out.

Now who was he to associate with?

Holy Willie and the solemn hide-bound elders?

Should it be with men on whom the fear chill rested, and who not only did not dare to speak, but were afraid to listen?

No! There was another Willie,—who

“brewed a peck of malt
And Rob and Allan came to pree.
Three blither hearts that lee-lang night
Ye wad’na find in Christendie.”

The Willie was William Nicol—a teacher of classics in the Edinburgh High School.

Allan was Allan Masterton—a music teacher in the same school. He was a poet himself, and composed the airs to some of Burns’ songs, including this one.

The Rob was Burns.

As the glasses clinked, they skoke out, and said what they thought. They told the truth from their heart-deeps.

The celestial thrill of the Scotch whiskey was like the sting of the wide-winged angel’s lance.

In every foam bead that reveled on the jorum there lurked a pawky imp with a fancy or a rhyme. The suppressed thoughts of the day danced on the bubbles of night.

Doubtless at the familiar touch the ‘Tam O’ Shanter piper,—came also, and played some good tunes on the side. They say he always did have the best ones.

John Parleycorn is a freebooter of ideas. He covered Scotch territory.

Where he went men talked out loud.

Hell was adjourned

Scotland began to stop roasting babies:—or at least didn't cook them as well done as it could;—and stopped making unfortunate girls get on a stool at church.

Much of what the purist critics call coarse in Burns was not considered so in his times. We change our words with each generation in the effort to get smooth glossy ones that don't mean quite as much as the old ones.

As use makes their meaning plain again, and they no longer conceal thought,—they must be covered with new camouflaging.

Those whose primsie noses perk up at plain talk are generally the ones who need it most.

The old Scotch songs of the time of Burns were rank and smutty even for those days. The ones that he rewrote are refined and tempered.

Instead of being coarse,—he was finer than his age.

If we criticise his language we reflect on our own personal ancestors who lived in his generation.

At times his rhythm is like a mellow Cremona. At others it is rugged and whacks like a stout cudgel.

The strolling fiddler had tasted the blood of the Nibelungen dragon, and kept its talisman—the gift to know what the wild folk-music tells.

To him the babble of birds and rivers and the jungle ululu—came like the patois of the hamlet—the burry lingo of the Lallands.

Burns was the poet of everyday people and used their language. But he proved to be the poet of all classes and taught them to know his language.

When the kilted regiments,—“The Ladies from

Hell",—as the enemy called them—went over the top to the tune of Scots that bled with Wallace:—even the Germans could understand the ululu of the North.

For their onset harked to the olden day,—when the Highland claymores lit with battle lumin, and the pi-brochs keened the winds of Killiecrankie.

Then as Aytoun wrote:—

“Like a tempest down the ridges
Swept the hurricane of steel,
Rose the slogan of Macdonald,—
Flashed the broadsword of Lochell.

* * * * *

“And the evening star was shining
On Schelhallion’s distant head,
When they wiped their bloody broadswords,
And returned—to count the dead.”

The story of Burns has been told in patchwork quilt style by many biographers and editors. It is checkered with contradictions and their quarrels with each other. The seams are puckered with moral homilies and the rivalry of publishers. Mosaics are not the happiness of art.

The Burns we read about is in many ways a myth-man—much in the class with King Arthur and Robin Hood.

The dark-room negatives from different cameras make a composite photograph.

There are three kinds of fiction:—novels, history,—and then most fabulous of all—biography.

He is fabled in fantastic slander—the libel that stabs behind the mask of half truth.

Robert Burns was born on the 25th day of January 1759 at the hamlet of Alloway in the county of Ayr in Southwestern Scotland.

His father was a small tenant farmer. In those days most of rural Scotland was tilled by tenants.

We are often told that Robert was born in a hovel. It was what was called a "Clay Cottage." It was built by his father, and was a better home than most of the neighbors had. To be sure part of a gable end blew in when the boy was a week old. But "Winds frae aff Ben Lomond blaw," and are often rough with gables and things.

Daniel Webster, Abe Lincoln, and many prominent Americans of generations later than Burns were born in log cabins.

Log houses and clay cottages were the family mansions where the old folks lived.

They were not considered hall-marks of poverty and hardship. They belonged to the democratic order of architecture. It was not Corinthian—not Doric. Perhaps it was like the residence a man of moderate means put up. He said it was "Queen Ann front, and Mary Ann at the back."

It is a common statement that Burns was not educated.

Professor Wilson—the famous Christopher North of Scottish literature—says that "Not a boy in Scotland had a better education than Burns."

His father and some of the neighbors clubbed together and hired a good schoolmaster to teach their children. The father also taught his family at home.

At the age of eleven Robert was considered an expert in English grammar, and soon was apt in mathematics.

But it makes the chronicle sound democratic to say that he was an ignorant boy born in a hovel.

In Abe Lincoln's case it adds zest to tell that yarn about the log house he was born in, having only three sides. Logs were plenty, and a fellow would have hard work to build such a house without all the sides to hold up the notched log-ends.

Biographers are almost always architects—of the other fellow's fortune.

Those of Burns made some very blue prints of his character.

He read every book he could get hold of. The love of reading builds education. Without it a boy can be standardized through a college and a professional school and not be educated.

There were not many books in those days. Now we have too many.

When quite young he read Pope and Shakespeare, Locke and Allan Ramsey.

He even read a theological treatise on the Doctrine of Original Sin.

If anything would make a boy an expert in sin,—that ought to qualify him.

He worked on a farm. Not a bad thing for a youngster. The one who never did, has skipped a branch of liberal education.

He worked for seven pounds a year and his board. That would be about thirty-five dollars of our money:—In those times equal to about \$245.00 now. Not the ransom of an American citizen caught in Mexico,—but very well for a boy learning to be a farmer.

He also vexed his father and some other good people by going to a dancing school.

You need not expect the ghost of the elder Burns at the party to-night.

He went to a good scientific school at Kirkoswald to study mathematics mensuration and surveying.

This was near the smuggling coast of Scotland. The smugglers did not run goods in with automobiles. They used sailing vessels.

There were white sails above the deck, but

“Sometimes she wobbled, for be it told,
Casked in the dark of her roomy hold.
Gurgied the liquor of pleasant sin,
Rum of Jamaica and Holland gin.”

The smugglers were a bold and hardy crew. They were quite popular with people who drank. In those days that meant almost everybody—including the preachers.

But the preachers said such long graces before the can was tossed, that the whiskey got old enough to start Auld Lang Syne.

Their blessings made time between drinks as long as war time prohibition.

To-day,—‘time turns backward in its flight’,—and it is Longfellow whiskey. It has found its Lost Youth, and is too young to love

One swig,—and a fellow says O My * * * !—well he says—“Deleted”—instead of—Halleluiah!

The sailors believed in the old Indian’s maxim that:—“Too much rum is just enough.” They showed folks how to combine tax dodging with pleasure.

If the people had no revenue liquor or contraband goods, they used home made brands. The art of home-brewed ale was well known.

We talk about dandelion wine.

Robert Louis Stevenson wrote

“From the bonny bells of heather
They brewed a drink long-syne
Was sweeter far than honey
Was stronger far than wine.”

The young Burns was attracted to the jolly smuggler parties. He learned to be a mixer where their social glass went round. Among them he said he made great progress in the knowledge of mankind. At the same time he did good work at school.

It was at the smuggler's taverns he met some of the characters he wove into 'Tam O' Shanter and the Jolly Beggars.

Burns went back to his home and mingled in the rural life of Scotland.

What was it?

The people were mostly tenants—many of them poor—and with large families. There was little pleasure for the young people except as they found it where they could.

Boys and girls worked together in the harvest field. They were much together in the evening. They fell in love like other boys and girls and were too poor to marry. Then as an old Scotch woman said:—"The quickest way to get rid of temptation is just to yield to it."

The world long ago found out that the most fascinating of all sports is hunting for temptation with intent to make it unanimous.

Odd customs grew up.

It never was the Anglo Saxon common law that a ceremony was necessary in order to make a valid marriage.

A contract between the parties—even a verbal one—if carried out, made the marriage legal. This was the law of Scotland. This is the law of Michigan today.

Such a marriage may be difficult to prove:—it may make the parties liable to penalty, but the marriage is valid and the children legitimate.

The prestige of ceremony however, was strong. To comply with it, customs were invented which would co-caine almost any docile conscience.

One of them was called—"Handfasting." If a boy and girl squeezed hands with the right grip and promised,—it was considered a marriage. There was no reason why it should not be,—if the parties were competent to make any marriage.

But there is a moral to this story. If a girl's hands get cold,—she ought to be wise and wary about the kind of muff she picks out to warm them.

There is a Scotch spinster song that runs like this;—

"Now, lads, and there's ony amang ye
Wad like just upon me to ca,
Ye'll find me no ill to be courted,
For shyness I hae put awa'.
And if ye should want a bit wifie
Ye'll ken to what quarter to draw;
And e'en should we no mak' a bargain
We'll aye get a kissie or twa."

These customs led to some laxity and confusion in forming the marriage relation. It was often necessary to set back the almanac.

They led to near marriages.

They were like near beer,—only about one and a half per cent matrimony.

In near beer the foam indeed is willing but the spirit is weak.

We have no statistics of illegitimate births that go back to those times. We know there were more of them than there are now. The Scotch percentage among the poorer people is large today.

Scotland would not tolerate a foundling hospital.

Where poverty and stringent statutes curb open marriages the laws of nature enforce themselves.

The old laws were barbarous. At one time an unfortunate mother was drummed through the town to the whipping post.

The church assumed to deal with the question. The parties who were caught had to stand up—or get on a stool—at Sunday meeting. Then they had to listen to a personally conducted Jeremiad from the preacher—that is the poor did. Those who were rich, or belonged to the nobility were allowed to compound with a fine. They sat in the audience and heard their humbler neighbors,—*“admonished.”*

The preacher whetted his whittle edge till the melted sulphide flew like sparks from an emery wheel.

The landlords looked on with Chessy cat grins and clinked the plate with coin the tenant farmers paid their stewards.

An entertainment of this kind drew a full house,—and that meant a good collection.

It was as good a show as bear-baiting, or a badger fight. It gave the congregation a taste of Heaven on earth to see the other animals—verberated.

Lots of people would like to go to such a function today.

Those talks were too long. Five gentle words—

floated across the ages from the misty hills of Gallilee—would have sufficed.

But the words had grown dim in the fogs of theology.
Are they clear today?

There was really a great deal of sympathy in the community for those who had met with casualties.

They had so many friends—and fellow sufferers, that there grew up in that society a sentiment of Bohemia, —a loosely defined order of outlaws that mingled in the daily life around them.

It was something like the Bohemia Robin Hood and his merry-men found in the oaklands of Sherwood forest.

Robin's rurals had also been caught at deer stealing.

It is not always a help to make laws and grow customs that strike at results instead of causes.

Build dykes and dams as you will,—the Mississippi will break onward to the Gulf. Nature's flood goes on to the ocean of posterity.

These accidents were often the result of sincere affection blended with discouraging poverty.

The immaculate—and those who claimed to be—were as usual loudest in condemning.

Bohemians are found from one cause or another in all the walks of life.

John Boyle O' Reily wrote—

“I'd rather live in Bohemia than in any
other land;

For only there are the values true,
And the laurels gathered in all men's
view.

Oh, I long for the glow of a kindly heart,
and the grasp of a friendly hand,
'And I'd rather live in Bohemia than in
any other land.”

It was the natural thing that Robert Burns with his genial nature—his talents and social qualities,—should drift to this border land.

Circumstances helped to get him there.

A young woman was working as a servant in his father's family. Little is known of her, except that she was somewhat masculine in nature,—a person able to take care of herself. There was no love affair, but trouble came. Rob was half to blame—no more.

We can see now what a real man did under such circumstances.

Burns took the little girl baby—claimed her openly as his daughter, and had her brought up in the family with his mother, and his brothers and sisters. (His father was then dead.)

He loved her with a father's love, and gave her a good education with his other children. She grew up a good woman and married well. He was much attached to her from infancy, and she to him.

He had to stand up in church and be rebuked by the Rev. William Auld. This was the famous "Daddie Auld." He was exceptionally gifted with zeal, and could repent fervently—of other people's sins.

When he had the cork out of a bottle of whiskey, the liquor never got much older. To be good collateral for him, it had to be a sight draft without the three days grace.

Burns was roasted on both sides by church and community. But this farm boy—then without money or property—would not disown his little natural daughter.

This was the child he called his:—

"Sonsie smirking dear bought Bess."

"His "Bonny sweet wee lady."

That means his jolly luckie smiling Bess.

When they teased him "In country clatter,"—he wrote a poem of welcome to her. This poem has been fiercely criticised, and is supposed to show what a bad man Burns was.

Read it! Read it with an open heart, and vision unclouded by the prejudice and conventionality of this age, or of a little island planet—in a provincial solar system.

While it is witty,—it is deep with genuine feeling, and pledged to the little one a father's care and affection.

This was no empty sentiment of a witful rhymer. The little Bess never failed of that father's love and care until the toiling hand that penned the poem fell cold and listless from the clasp of Death.

And the bright cheery song! It is worth more to humanity than all the soul-smart that was ever ladled over a broken hearted girl:—posed on a stool before the congregation for the edification of the saints:—then crushed like a mountain daisy under the plowshare of cant.

Today people rail at Burns and prate of the moral laxity of brave old rural Scotland.

But can our generation fan with the white wings of the immaculate?

Where lies now the Bohemian hover where lusty youth and buxom beauty dally?

Look on the back seats of automobiles parked along the country roads at night—that is,—if you can locate them with the glims doused.

Ask the Old Boy in the moon:—he who peers from the dim disk that rims young Luna's crescent.

Long ago he spied down on the banks of Ayr. Now he is grinning wiser wrinkles into his ancient mug.

In founding hospitals and orphan asylums, Henry Ford will be known as the Father of his country.

Later when Burns was about twenty-six years old, he fell genuinely in love with a Scotch lassie—Jean Armour,—the “Bonny Jean” of his songs.

Her father was a well to do man who would not listen to their marriage. Burns was then poor, and the girl did not care to bolt her family platform.

But they were much together, and soon a cloud loomed on the horizon. It looked as if Burns might have to write another nursery rhyme—and he did.

The young people drew up a written document of marriage and both signed it.

Eminent Scotch and English lawyers who have examined this writing, have pronounced it a valid marriage.

The cloud burst was twins.

Jean Amour's father was a stern Scotch parent. He would not accept a marriage between his daughter and a yokel like Burns.

He coerced his daughter. She gave him the marriage paper and he destroyed the signatures. He supposed this would render the document invalid. Then he had a warrant issued for Bobby.

Now a contract cannot be canceled except by the consent of both parties. A marriage contract cannot be set aside except by the arm of a court. The destruction of documents only makes proof more difficult.

It shows how lightly such matters were regarded in that Scotch community, when the father thought his daughter's reputation was not sufficiently at stake to make it expedient for her to be married to the father of her children.

Burns had no trade—no business. He had little Sonsie Bess to support. His father was dead. He was helping to care for his mother, and to educate his sisters.

But he was willing to do anything to support his family and wished the marriage made public.

The Armour family forbade him the house, and turned him from the door. The girl sided with her family and repudiated her husband.

This seems to have been the most trying time of his life. All the world was against him. He was the spotlight target for the fun-mongers:—especially on account of the former escapade and the catch of twins.

The law, and the gospel—and the society reporters were keen on his trail.

He wrote the poem called the “Lament.” It is full of sadness and distraction. In it among other things, he grieves because he is an outcast from his twin babies.

As a despairing resort he decided to sail for Jamaica, and try to make his fortune. But in order to sail he must have a passport. In it he must be described either as a married man or a bachelor.

If the notary had asked him if he was married or single,—Burns must have answered,—Yes sir I am.

The authorities decided he could have a bachelor’s passport if he would stand up in church and be “*admonished*.”

Perhaps they thought another wiggling would cure Burns of falling in love.

Here he was:—married by the laws of nature:—married by the law of Scotland:—married by the ties of offspring. Yet he was refused a way to make a living, and a providence for those dependent upon him except by disowning his marriage.

Deserted by his wife—poor and friendless—he decided to stand up; and had to do it seven times before the unction of Daddie Auld was exhausted.

His Reverence played the Devil's game and hauled Burns over the glowing coals by his hair.

We can see an ignoble plow-boy standing in the Ayrshire church that far-off day.

We can hear the anathemas of the bigot—who knew he was married;—yet was willing to part him from the rocker where his babies crooned.

And the social martyr—standing in the bear-garden—winked at by friends, and gloated over by Basilisk sanctimony:—was Robert Burns—the poet the English lands have crowned with laurel of liberty and song.

Beyond the seas lay the Indian Isle,—where the lover of liberty—who loved his native hills of Scotland, and the near ones of his they nestled—must live an exile and a slave driver.

And Daddie Auld was pronouncing the farewell oration of Scotland to Robert Burns—the maledictory.

But Bobby got even later on. The Domine found that his congregation were much interested in admonitions written in rhyme,—and there didn't seem to be any strike on, that was making hot coals scarce.

Before it was time to sail, Burn's publishers succeeded in launching an edition of his poems, and he received money enough to relieve his present embarrassment.

While he was thus left alone, he became acquainted with Mary Campbell—Highland Mary.

They were promised in marriage.

Soon she was stricken with a fever and died.

Her story and the poems Burns wrote about her, will haunt the years with the lyric pathos that lingers round the hawthorn glens.

“Ye banks and braes and streams around
The castle o’ Montgomery
Green be your woods, and fair your flowers,
Your waters never drumlie:
There Simmer first unfalds her robes,
And there the longest tarry;
For there I took the last Fareweel
O’ my sweet Highland Mary.

“How sweetly bloom’d the gay, green birk,
How rich the hawthorn’s blossom,
As underneath their fragrant shade,
I clasp’d her to my boosm
The golden Hours on angel wings,
Flew o’er me and my Dearie;
For dear to me, as light and life,
Was my sweet Highland Mary.

“Wi’ mony a vow, and lock’d embrace,
Our parting was fu’ tender;
And, pledging aft to meet again,
We tore oursels asunder;
But oh fell Death’s untimely frost,
That nipt my Flower sae early.
Now green’s the sod, and cauld’s the clay,
That wraps my Highland Mary.

“O pale, pale now, those rosy lips,
I aft hae kiss’d sae fondly
And clos’d for ay, the sparkling glance
That dwelt on me sae kindly
And mouldering now in silent dust.
That heart that lo’ed me dearly
But still within my bosom’s core
Shall live my Highland Mary.”

Afterwards Robert and Jean became reconciled and lived together until his death. But this did not come without bickerings, and until Jean was practically deserted by her friends.

The story that they settled this trouble by an after marriage is not true. They were never married again. It was not necessary. They made a public acknowledgement of the written marriage, and this has been fixed up into a story,—but it is only a fable of biography.

Their life for the most part was a happy one. He wrote not less than seventeen different poems to his Bonny Jean. Allusions to her are found in many a glowing line.

When he wrote his songs, she sang the airs and tried the tunes until he was satisfied he had done his best.

Was it strange the independent nature of Robert Burns made him chief in Bohemia?

Was it strange that he trimmed up the apostles of devilology?

The Scotch Robin loosed his minstrel long-bow, and the shafts of raillery whistled their merry tunes into the living targets.

How their harp-twang stings down the wind of story!

Like Percy's bow-boy in the ballad of Chevy Chase:—

“An Arrow of a clothyard long
Up to the head drew he,
Against Sir Hugh Montgomerye
So right the shaft he set,
The white swan-wing that was thereon
Was in his heart's blood wet.”

Afterwards he was appointed a guager of liquors, and travelled round the different parishes in his district.

When he was about twenty-seven years old his business took him often to Dumfries, and he was much at the Globe Tavern.

There seems to have been a temporary misunderstanding between Burns and Jean at this time. Nobody explains it. Certainly not the biographers with their surmises.

Burns became acquainted with Ann Park—neice of the landlady of the Globe. She was bar maid and waitress at the tavern, and the "Anna of the Golden Locks,"—no artless lass of Arcady.

Another casualty resulted—Burns' daughter Elizabeth.

This was in some way arranged in the family. The child was taken to the Burns home. Jean laid it in the same cradle with a little stranger of her own that had just discovered Ayr Shire.

Her old father came to see her, and seeing two in the crib asked if twins had come again. Jean told him one was a neighbor's child and its mother was sick. ("It's a neebor's bairn who is unweel.") This was the exact truth.

Jean deserved the red cross medal—"For distinguished service—in time of war." Some married ladies would have been fussy. But her experience had taught her the kindly credo of Bohemia. She became much attached to the child.

The cradle song of Bonny Jean must have floated down to her mother heart from some star with kinder skies than ours.

This child like the other was brought up and educated with the children of the family. Rob and Jean were

both good fellows and ran their own family. Biographers and other folks had better leave it to them.

Of course a rhyme went with the occasion. Some people think it the worst of Burns.

The passion song to Anna is shell-shock to the Whittier school. But it sings like the goose-wing arrow over the Scotch and English lands.

When it is clipped from the scroll of Burns, the same committee of censors will burn the Odes of Horace and the roundelays of Beranger. They will cremate whole scenes of Shakesphere, and several naughty poems of Ella Wheeler Wilcox. Walt Whitman and Billy Sunday will be caught in the altogetther and barbecued.

Also the Song of Solomon may have to go in the discard.

The Creator made many races of animals on the planet ploygamous,—so they could be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth. Ours is one of them.

We have not come like the trees that Tennyson says:—

“But languidly adjust
Their vapid vegetable loves
With anthers and with dust.”

The race is not surviving today through stock-farm eugenics. The red heart-wave of Cro-Magnon cave man has borne it on.

“Almost everybody is an accident.”

The child of Anna of the Norseland hair made a good woman. She married and her descendants are said to transmit the strain of Burns with more prepotence than those of his other children.

Where is the posterity of Whittier?

Anthems and pollen failed to register the blood-pressure of Scotland and Burns.

This Scotch Bohemia was real to the Bohemians who lived by the banks of Ayr.

Many a man has stood fair before the world because he wasn't caught,—and perhaps had money and influence. Many another escapes who deserted mother and child,—or perhaps sent the innocent down the dark way of the unborn.

The life of Burns was not the story of pathos and despair that Carlyle and some of the others, go into tribulations over.

Ups and downs he had like other men. But on the whole he took life as a cheery stunt. He was a bright companion and a sincere friend.

Like other bright spirits he was at times dispondent.

It is not a sad Burns:—but the gloomy sphinx of Carlyle—couchant on the desert sands—that spreads the shadow.

Carlyle's essay is a dreary dirge keyed to the sub-bass of a church organ. From beginning to end there is not a flick of a smile—not a patch of sunshine on the heather.

'All must feel sad at the poverty and distress that came upon Burns at the end of his life.

He had helped his mother, and helped his sisters. He prided himself on the appearance of his own family and kept his wife and children well dressed. He had loaned money to his brother that he badly needed,—equal to about \$8,000.00 now. It could not be returned.

They made him keeper of the vineyards, but his own vineyard did he not keep.

The story that his sickness and death were caused by a night exposure after a drunken spree is not true.

But he died in financial distress. A warrant was out for him. Imprisonment for debt was then legal.

He worried about his family. His last child was born during his funeral.

Burn's mind was broad and liberal not only for his times but for all times.

He did not believe in the theology of the church, but he respected sincere religion, and had faith in immortality.

He was not the kind of reformer that plans with malice aforethought to uplift the world. He left that to Atlas and the others who feel so much responsibility about it. He was not a meddler.

While he had no sympathy with the intolerant institution of the Covenanters, and had suffered from it,—he could do them justice.

With all their grim intolerance, the Covenanters had been the apostles of Scotland's liberty. They had stayed the tyranny of the feudal barons.

Burns knew his country's history and respected them.

When he heard the Covenant slurred he wrote these lines:—

“The solemn league and Covenant
Cost Scotland blood—cost Scotland tears;
But it sealed Freedom's sacred cause—
If thou'rt a slave, indulge they sneers.”

Burns was the poet of womanhood. His touch on the lute strings runs from Bonny Mary on the hillside—the queen of a cottage—to lovely Queen Mary in the halls of Holyrood.

A white neck was laid under England's axe. An impassioned and beautiful face shines starlike through the song and the story of Scotland:—even as the Grecian Helen's through the song of Troy. And Marie Steuart is mourned in no sweeter requiem than the one the plow-boy wrote.

He loved nature and birds and the animals.

Here of course should slide in—the beatified legend of Orpheus—Ancient of the tale-spinner's biography yarns.

After their other fables,—it is easy to believe that the wild-folk went a-dreaming to his ukelele like dough-boys to the mess bugle.

Pied piper's piccolo and chuck-horn solo, play but a stolen stave from the old sorcery harp:—the mess call to a feasting in the promised land.

Echo-drift from the load-star lyre of Orpheus must have spilled around the hills of Scotland. For if Robert Burns saw a wounded hare limp by, or a bashful grass-mouse, he made them his comrades and ours.

We were all poets in our youth, but as we grow up we get ashamed of the poetry in our natures.

A man might as well be ashamed of his grandmother who was the loving friend of his childhood. For it is Nature—the olden mother that whispers.

The real poets are the listeners:—they who cherished the early dreams and longings, and let them grow, and

wove them into language in the effort to translate them for us.

They are castaways from some far-off planet—shipwrecked on our wild shore. They know their native home is in the distant sun-land—out among the ranges of the great telescopes. But when they tell us of it, we listen to the music and mock the soul-beats of the singer.

Robert Burns died on the 21st day of July, 1796 at the age of about thirty-seven and one-half years.

Never lived a master-singer so frank and brave.

He would not shirk the consequences of his faults. Instead of hiding his mistakes, he openly did his level best to right them.

Since the lyric heart of Scotland stilled, the mountain daisies have crimsoned the hills for more than a hundred springtimes. And the Burns memorial is not yet written. His poems have reached only the nearest of the audience.

But from clouds that never floated, the reeling larks—like Bonny Jeans—will lilt his tunes;—and the river's immemorial organ tell the idyls to the ocean.

Down the generations yet to live—rich and poor—dweller in the city, and Lincoln boy in the wilderness—lover and hero and sweetheart,—will know the revel of his song.

The absent lover will send his girl a copy of "My Nannie's a'wa," for a Valentine.

She will send him back—"O Whistle and I'll come to You My Lad."

He whose reverie quests the lost love of his youth—gone beyond a wider stream than flowed around Montgomery—will dream of Highland Mary.

He who toils in hardship will read:—

"The rank is but the guinea stamp
The man's the gowd for a' that."

The future holds in mystic hush the music for John Andersons not started up the hill;—and even the unsung memory of us is there in “Auld Lang Syne.”

As the world runs on, and younger Scotlands rise on Scotland—like the white crags of Ben Lomond:—they shall never blush for the minstrel boy of their native land.

Robert Burns will blow the lowland Pan-pipes down the ages.

And on in sun-lit Maydays we shall never ken:—a man shall be a man, and a woman a woman, for all that.

—00—
THE END
—00—

COLONEL WESTNEDGE

From "The Kalamazoo Herald" of
Dec. 19, 1918.

Colonel Joseph B. Westnedge died at an army hospital at Nantes—in the old province of France that was Brittany—November 29th, 1918.

So runs the message sent across the sea that told the ending of his bright heroic story.

The trumpets had sounded, "Cease Firing," along the battle lines of France. His friends were already making plans as to what they would do to, "Jo", when he reached home. Then from out the clouds—the bugler of the innumerable legions blew for him, the call,—"Lie Down."

He was the ideal type of the American volunteer—the citizen soldier.

His military experience began in Company C—the Kalamazoo unit of the old 2nd Infantry of the Michigan National Guard.

For years the National Guard worked against discouragement. But it was the organization that kept alive the army spirit through the long night of American unpreparedness.

The people had settled down to the belief that we should never have another war:—or if we did, the navy would take care of it in a few weeks—so what was the use of military outfits in time of peace?

One of the Guard problems was,—how a youngster could master the complicated profession of the modern soldier, and still be a citizen and succeed in his daily business.

Surely it took the up-hearted spirit of the soldier, and the patriotism that must be a part of good citizenship to carry-on both at the same time.

He took great interest in the Armory Building, and the fittings for the local companies.

At the time the troops left home, his own name and those of several of our local officers were on paper at the bank for moneys borrowed for the Armory fund.

These notes amounted to about five thousand dollars. They have since been paid by public donations.

When the Spanish-American war came,—the thought that drew the people on, was finer than the watchword,—“Remember the Maine.” The medieval curse of Castile was brooding over Cuba. Spain showed the same cruel disregard for human wrong and suffering that has marked the German invasions.

When President McKinley called for volunteers, the regiment went to Island Lake to muster in for the war. This was a little more than twenty years ago. Jo West-nedge was then a lieutenant in Company C.

Another, “Jo”,—Jo Nolan,—was its captain. He too was an ideal officer—loved by his men and considered of promise by his superiors. His ambition and his whole heart was in his work. But that boy soldier’s heart! At his physical examination the surgeons found that even then its beats were almost numbered.

Nolan soon passed away. After the examination he came to my tent, and choked when he told me he was not to go. The disappointment probably hastened the end.

I asked him who would be Captain of C. He said,—
“The other Jo,—Company C. will be all right.”

So Captain Westnedge had the experience of serving through the Spanish-American as a company commander.

An officer who takes a higher rank without this episode is handicapped. The company is the real unit of the service,—and at times may be a little army of itself.

Its commander is brought in touch with the men. He knows their wants and troubles—their easily besetting—faults:—for even a good soldier can at times be a good sinner. A company officer learns to understand the human nature of soldiers, and finds out their way of looking at things.

Without this experience—and without the kindly sympathy which was part of the Joe Westnedge make-up—an officer cannot be a real leader.

He served with his company until mustered out at the end of the war. By common consent he was a credit to the service; and his work had the warm approval of superior officers.

At the close of the Spanish-American war he stayed with the Michigan organization of the regiment, and rose to be its Lieutenant Colonel.

When the National Guard was again called out of the state, it was for service on the Mexican border.

Again with the old company, he was on active service with the old regiment, and became its Colonel.

No one dreamed how soon the training he gave it, would be tested in the greatest world war.

When the storm broke,—it found him ready with the outfit.

The boys who walked our streets in the heyday of youth were soon to rival in story the armies gray with

legend—those that since the dawn of history have fought over the fields of France.

The accounts we have of Colonel Westnedge from the time he landed with them—"Over There"—show him with the regiment he had carefully and ably coached.

How well he did his work, is told by the fact that when his command was enlarged to the foreign service limit, he was retained as colonel. It was selected from the greatest army the United States ever mustered, as one of the units of its flower guard.

A man may be a good officer—faithful and careful in the discharge of his duties:—but the final test of the soldier that includes all others, must be,—is he a commanding officer in presence of the enemy?

This test he seems to have met—not only with the record of well done,—but with distinguished courage and ability. Those who were with the regiment when its cradle was rocked, must always cherish with mournful pride this memory. When those supreme hours of adventure came,—it was led by a soldier who had grown up with it:—by one who has placed it with the regiments from the time of the revolution on, that have marked the color lines of American history.

Still young,—he was old enough for developed judgment. Grant was forty-two when Lee surrendered. Colonel Westnedge was forty-six at the end.

A military officer is not made in a day. He had been training for about twenty-five years.

Citizen soldier of two wars for ideals:—he lived to see the lone star of the Indies float from a liberty mast; and heard the chimes of victory play from belfries that had grieved for Lafayette.

In the heart of his country his laurels are safe.

Among his old friends and comrades there goes with the wreath, a feeling of personal loss—a sensing that the spirit passed on is rarely equaled—the genial kindly spirit of Jo Westnedge.

Poor and hollow would be the words we murmur above his lowly head, if we could only echo that he had been a skillful officer.

We can go beyond that, and feel rather than speak—a tribute to his manly worth and his kindly human sympathy.

The men in his regiment were to him his soldier brothers, with whom he would gladly live, and if need be gladly die.

They had no danger to face on the firing line their Colonel would not share:—no trouble he would not try to make lighter:—no hardship in which he would not bear his part.

To his immediate family there is little we can say, except to tell them our sympathy is deeper than the touch of language,—and that the sunset shadows fall eastward to the morning.

He sleeps in the ancient cathedral city where King Henry signed the famous Edict of Nantes, that gave freedom to the Huguenots. It is in a land where the last crusaders of liberty have written an ampler edict that makes men and women free.

The signets to the charter are ruddy drops from warm brave hearts. Opposite one of them is written the name—Westnedge of Kalamazoo.

In Memorial Mays whose bloomage we shall never wreath,—garland and song and the messenger of eloquence will not let it fade.

By the banks of the Loire there is a green mound the reverie of Michigan haunts. There the minstrel winds of

Brittany sing the requiem of Nature—the infinite mother. When they journey onward,—it changes to a new song of the people's hope.

We hear that Company C, is shattered. Many others from Kalamazoo sleep in the vineyard land.

And some have come home to their rest.

Twenty-three centuries ago, Pericles stood over his country's dead in a garden of Athens and said:—

"Youth perished from the city like spring from the year," and,—“Immortality belongs to those who die in the service of their country.”

They may camp with Lafayette and Westnedge:—or in grassy mounded arbors of their native land. The same benediction of the sunset hallows the oaken cross beyond the Atlantic,—and tides homeward with the dial till it nestles on the Westland marble. Its farewell glimmer on the lowly barrows is an earnest of the flushing dawn on eternal highlands.

NOTE.

Colonel Irish served twelve years with the 2nd Infantry of the Michigan National Guard—five years as Captain of Company C; and between five and six years as Colonel of the regiment. He was not with it in the Spanish-American:—but went out as Colonel of the 35th Michigan,—a volunteer regiment which he organized to fill out the state quota, after the National Guard had all gone in.

Editor Herald.

WAITING FOR A SAIL

Attention of Our Inter-ocean Post Boy.

She stands on the roof
 and peers for a sail.
But the mist on the tide
 is gray like a veil;
And the wings of the boat
 never float in, the haze
To joyance the eyes
 that grow dim with the days.

Can you guess the rare cargo
 that lags on the brine?
It is made up of gold
 from a story-old mine;
And the more of the ore
 that goes cruising away,—
All the more will be left
 for a sunnier day.

For the bark with white sails
 and the lingering spars—
That is steered from its port
 by the mystery stars,—
Bears a message of fate
 becalmed in the mail.
And so she must wistfully
 wait for a sail.

THE MAINE

By the marge of the dusky Antilles
Our ship was a-swing on the wave.
On the breasts of its sailors the lilies
Gleam white as they garland the brave.

*

In Spain's mystic port of Havana,
A blink of the sun's dimming light
Caressed the last tinge of the banner
While bugles were lilting good night.

The stars that shone white in the glooming
Were black ere the refrain of dawn;
'And the spell of the mariner's dooming
Had silenced the tune of the horn.

The crew to the cloud-lands were sailing;
And sweet haunting eyes on the pier
The barques of the dreamers seemed hailing,
As home to their slumber drew near.

Then a red ocean Etna uprending,
Made flame of the battleship's pride;
And the sea-raging dragon was sending
The Blues with a toss on the tide.

*

The dead sailors found after the wreck were buried
on the Island,—and the Cubans draped the mounds with
lilies.

They were sailors a-cruise with the thunder;
The lads who could make the old flag
To far briny portals, a wonder
That heralds more cannon than brag.

In the smoke of the battle guns chiding
We knew that their hearts would be leal;
But a mad lurking devil was hiding
Deep down by the Ironclad's keel.

A breeze of the ocean eternal
Round haven-slung hammocks a-hum!—
The rend of the powder infernal!
The gunners at anchor-watch dumb!

O, brave were the dreams of the sailor
Who rocked in the mystery boat:—
For who was the powder imp's jailor
To tell him how long it would float.

They sleep by the bright island surges:—
We grieve with the gulf's moaning dirges;
And pluck with impassioned emotion
For mariners dead with the "Maine"—
For our exiles a-cold in the ocean—
The red thorny roses of pain.

* * * * *

The lilies of Castile are fading
On mounds by the Indies' strand;
And the fragrance of memory lading
The winds of their fond native land.
The stars that charm sweetly above them
Beguile their long dream by the sea.
May a flag with a lone star to love them
Float over an Isle of the Free.
April, 1898.

NAP IN THE SADDLE

SCENE I A lake-side resort. Time morning.

An English girl in cross-seat riding habit, waits for the saddle horses. The groom is late. She sits down in a hammock and carefully pulls the skirt of her riding coat over a fresh tear in the trousers.

She drops asleep. It is the morning after the country mask-ball, and she was up late last night. Her hair falls down and at times is lifted on the breeze.

A small brook runs through the grove. Across it, her brindle bull-terrier has treed a squirrel. Other wag-tails are stricken with acute ecstasy. In vain the lady boarders shout the recall at them.

Some of the boys are yelling,—“*Sic I’m Trix!*” Bare-footed they splash through the stream and race for the tree. Several little pigs are scared ahead, and scurry in yapulant panic.

The Bolsheviki mob about the tree refuse to listen to reason—from female politicians.

The squirrels up the other trees—vo-zip-perate.

There is a wooded turn in the near-by road, and the auto horns challenge it with long and short signals.

From the stables, the blooded Kentuck nickers a cheery solo—on his oaten Pan pipe.

An impertinent rooster on the fence mocks
its echo.

From boughs above the cradle—an astral
Puckrell winks, and drips the poppy sap.

A mortal wag—in spurs and khaki—
steals up and gently sways the net.

A young lady sitting near, sings in a low
sweet voice,—

“By Baby Bunting—

Daddy’s gone a-hunting.”

And,—

“Rock-a-bye baby in the tree top.”

A youngster strums support on a banjo.
and varies with rag-time, and the rocking
is cadenced to the tunes.

The blonde naps on:—but now a peachy
wine brims tingent in her cheek.

Her left hand clutches a mesh of the
swing with a nervous jerk. A murmur plays
on the sleeping lips. A sensitive ear—for mu-
sic—might catch a piccolo octave—followed by
—“*Trix! Go home!*”

A small black spider darts over her
fingers. The thumb turns up and points for-
ward between the ears—of the hammock.

She now holds the hemp with a caress—
as if it were a rubber cord to be relaxed or
pulled.

PROLOGUE

She tips, and on her lips the pranky smiles
Half blab how wily Mab a dream beguiles.
The Queenie flicks unseen the hammock nag.
The colt that trots no jolt, shall quest the stag;

And Trix in winks his flixy tail shall wag.
Now mad-folk—down a glad ancestral trance—
With lurking Puck—come perking dim romance.
In yore-land woods the boar-hunt riders go.
In luck at view, the buck-hounds jump the roe.
And back to olden-time more packs may rail:—
While larking in the dream, a hark-horn hail
Lures on—where vision hunters lose the trail.

THE DREAM

O Fleethart—ranger of the wild—
What rolling lasso hoop
Your wary feet beguiled?
The shooting loop
Has snared you in its droop

No colt from Arab desert well:—
Or Old-Kentucky Dixies:—
For silver cup or golden spell
Can pool with Barb of Pixies.

A witch'es plug will rear on air
And mop the Bureau weather.
I know that at a fancy scare—
(And sometimes at a country fair)—
Old Peg will clear the heather.
But who had guessed Your Nervy Grace
Was sprung from Goblin-bred eternal—
Of gamy heart and foxy pace—
That range Endymion's vernal?
(A fly flew on his ear—
My hand feels creepy queer,)

No throbbing hoof-beats stir my seat:—
Like a wolf the pathway trailing,—
Where fall the white and wingy feet
That fan along this sailing.
(His gallop tricks so pat and true,—
This horse seems fit to carry two.
 (They'd have to hug
 And sit up snug.)

The wind that frets my streaming hair,
A flossy mane carresses,
I know not where I go nor care—
So light the bridle presses.
And now—down Sherwood's forest trail
The ruddy dawn is sliding:—
While winds the Saxon bugle scale,
And tonic hounds are chiding.
Afar at first the echo,
But now it seems to beck—O
A-like a hope in hiding.

The rouse wakes up the quarry's lair.
My veins with vintage jingle:—
Could a girl this revel dare.—
And its run through gulch and dingle?
Are those the wild boar's yawling shrills
With the hounding yaps a-mingle?
They buzz my nerve like dental drills—
When the spin jumps on with a tingle.
I hear the glen maids scream
Like scares on lips that dream.
He's the Bug of the jungles
If the slot-bitch bungles.

At pealing horn and forest cries,—
How high my horse is bounding:—
While kindle keen his wide-set eyes—
Turned where the hunt is sounding!

What bright haired queen beside me goes?
Ah Elgiva—loved in story!
But no—a plate-glass window shows
My shadow crowned with Saxon glory!

And yet it seems not strange to me
For plate-glass panel's dark reflector
To gleam by Sherwood's linden tree,
And trick my double for a spectre.

Or was it Eve-wise Dryad
In boot and—checks attired?
(I guess she tripped—
Her—things are ripped.)

I heard the tree-girl's song
As I rode along.
Her Druid croon.
Was some sweet tune
From the homing soul
In a sea-shell's bowl.
From the world apart
It melts my heart;
And glims with glamourie
A misty memorie.

Now through the oaks
With hob-nob jokes
And rollic shout

Jinks on the rout.
And in the lead—they cheer
A flash of fear.
The buck-hound's zip
Its heels may nip.
I hear the jets from bugles keen.
I see the sheen
Of Lincoln green—
And in that larky picnic party
Rides one who spurs in khaki.
There a-thwart the hawthorne cover
See the hurdle jumpers hover—
And here and there the scarlet kindle—
And far in front—a *dog of brindle!*

His flutty wag
Is the guidon flag,—
Or the plume of Navarre
That shines like a star.
If he trees that pig
He may be wiser,
And get a twig—
As did Tricks Kaiser,—
That H. C. L.
Is fierce in ham.
And he'l catch—
(A rhyme for L.)
But he won't give a—
(Rhyme for ham.)
And like the twinkling Procyon—
In stella lore,
The canis minor
That goes before
Orion's big-dog shiner—

He'l hunt anon—the sky on.
And be a good dog gone.

Jim Abbot raised the pup.
At shows they take the cup.
O never! Trix won't *bite*!
No—he don't get tight.
He frisked my—togs last night.
Of course he barks at cats:—
He found them on a chair

And shook the pair,
And tore that tear.

But then he's zeal on rats.

My tunic spats—
And shows the hole—

(I almost said—Sheol!)

He nips at Fleethart's heels—

Until I squirm like eels,
And let out squeals.

And if I send him back—

He's sure to loop my track.

I stayed with Jim

So late to dance—

Trix took the whim

To rip my—O figs!—

His *Jigs* to—*Prance*!

He plays till he pants.

I wouldn't care

If I had another pair.

O I can swim,

But I like Jim:—

And so I let him dream

He's teaching me the stream.

The woods grow dim—
I cannot swim—
O Jim!

SCENE II The spider imp comes back. She is an old and cunning dame with Xey eyes that leer the brain. She slides along the sleeping face.

The branches over-head shake with a puff of Eurus.

Some drops of morning dew spray down as fell the Lethe Lull on Palinurus.

Trix has caught the squirrel!
There is a victory jubilee.

ON WITH THE TRANCE!

That fly is a freak
It nipped my cheek.
The dogs are off the peep
Of the wild-heel's leap.
They run in laps
With silly yaps.
The gay shirt frills
From the bal-masque rills,
Dance waltz quadrills
That swim on the hills.
The horse that jolts the boar
Falls down on the ball-room floor.
I catch no step, in the riddles
The Cremona fiddles
Of the wood-bands fling.
But the belling swells

The viol's ring
On the catgut rack—
Hark-on the wildered pack.

Along the screen the movies glimpse.
I see the wet grass brim
And the glancing spiders skim—
And the girls who dance with Jim.
There's pert old Mab—the Queen of Imps;—
And a whelp gets goled and limps.

It's lady's choice:
They've caught their boys.
Those horrid flirts
In the two-step glance.
There's *Jim with Nance*
And I can't dance—
For I tore my—skirts.

The jump-hounds have no sniff.
The slow-dogs trail a whiff.
So now the leash-boy slips
Old Meg—for witch-nose 'tips.
No chance for her to flunk it.
She'd smell the dens
Of the moonshine pens—
In Tunkett.
Old Meg would nose for a peg—
And find a keg
Where Nick's own spell
In—(I won't tell.)—had sunk it.

She nags cold reek
Of the tricky freak

In the fenland ruck;—
And she's good for the spoil
Down the still-hunt foil
To the—Angel's—truck.

And Jim I guess—
Might slip the dream-hound's throng—
And lip the horn.
He told me once
That runaway stunts
On a blooded racer,
Were about as sane
As swiging champagne
With a whiskey chaser.
I know he rides a horse,—
But whence that fond remorse?

He *must* suppress
His canteen thirst
For moonshine nips—
When the hammock—rips,
(He is the worst!)
It is Dian's pony:—
It carries two—
But just to coo.
And he gets phony
And shocks my—symphony.

But after all,—what harm
To skim the jorum,
And sip the charm,—
Just in a dream-rhyme variorum!

I ride the swish of the coppice spray—
In dews that damp the May.

In their plashy smacks
They smell sachet—
Like the rose bouquet
That was sent by—Max

Where goes the fresh of the rose
When its perfume blows?
Where spent the virile scent
For the slot forgot.
Where spoom the muzzles true
That sift the tainted dew,—
The cunning—fled
From the blood-hound dead?

Where vanish the love-lies
That float on the masker's lips—
Where the tide of mad Burgundy dips
When its undertow slips;—
And told by coquetry eyes
With the wits
Of the kits
In the domino slits?

That jimpy doe
Is a changling roe.
For the brown eyes glow
In the necromancy
Like the eyes of Nancy;
And its green shirt waist
Goes well with her—taste.
The eerie beaut
Is playing cute.
The witch is rich.
But there lurks in the wood—

With his bugle slung
And his bow fresh strung:—
One Robin Hood.
Like a ghost he glides
Through the thicket slides,—
Lest the king's good sling
His neck should swing.
He marks sweet Nancy
With a goose-wing fancy.
That nanny roe
Falls quick for a beau.
I don't care
If he shoots a tear—
Or pinks the minx:—
For she is the slim
Who is after Jim.
If he wants that flirt—
Why she can have *him*,—
And this whole concert.
His green-shirt spouse
Could give him a house.

Along the margent day,
From onward years I heard a lay,—
And some strange ukelele play.
Afar on the horizon
The dawn-shine
Smiled surprise on
A cottage vine;—
And then went homing
Down the gloaming.
I saw a twilight rush-light glim,—
And up the path came—J-Jim.

I hear again the Dryad sing:
And sweeter falls the hymn.
She trills some fairy mother-key:—
Yet strange as dreams to me.
It thrills afar
From the Curfew star—
(On drifting wings.)
And as the echo sings—
Its tune like a cradle swings.

THE LASS OF THE LINDEN.
(The Tree Maid's Chant.)

The Linden tree
Belongs to me.
I am the soul
Of the Linden's bole.
In the sap of its shoot
My life took root.
When it dies
My spirit flies.
The Linden grew
In the crimson dew
By the Dragon's cave—
Where the hot-heart spill
Of the gallant knave
Its roots would fill.

The Linden high
Tops in the sky.
Its bright tides flow;—
And its blossoms blow
In billowy seas
For the honey bees.

For a thousand years
It rocks and cheers.
In its branches slung
My hammock hung.
When the rolling raft
In the tempest swung—
I lay and laughed.
When the leaguer trumpet blew
My heart to the Goblin flew—
That the bandit Siegfried slew.
The wine of my prime
Was the juice of the Lime,
And the tangy flood
Of the Wyvern's blood.
The vintage sting
Of the song I sing—
To you I bring.

The spell I drank
In my bosom sank:—
Till I knew each tune
The birds and rivers rune:—
The storm in the trees:
The surge of the seas:—
The wild-tongue's cry
And the branches sigh.
The age's chime
Was my cradle rhyme.
What it sang to me
I tell to thee.

This a song
Before you are born—
The voice of the deep

You shall hear in your sleep.
You shall come to life
In a world of strife;—
And far will you sail
On the ether gale—
Storm for your guest;
And waves in your rest.

I am the wave
From the heart
Of the Linden brave.
The boar's mad rave:—
The bay-hound's stave;
And the lark's sweet hymn
On the morning's rim:—
Each pipe a note
Of the song remote:—
For the deep sends its call
With the voice of all.

I am the lass of the Linden—
Belle of the tree-lands.
When falls my leafy urn
On the drift to the lee-lands:—
The dragon shall turn
In the storm-foam rack:—
The tide we shall spurn,—
And I will fight back.
Death I fear not:—
Let it come by age,
Or the axe-bit rage:—
The steel and its slash
No terror can flash.
If battle shock

The wood-lands rock,—
Then my tree and I
Like the soldier die.

When the raucous shell
Through the drift-gas Hell,—
Went by on its quest
For the leal of the west,—
Over the droop
From the starry troop,
Did the maid of the Linden stoop.
And little they knew
As the gun-bees flew—
In the forest rue,
That the cross she wore
Was red with the shed
Of a dragon's gore.

Be longing and brave:—
The heir-loom of Linden
Is—fear not the grave.
Death's brimming bowl
Is the sap of the lime
At the top of its climb—
In a stirrup-cup troll.
Swage deep with the flagon
That beads with the dragon:—
Then gayly ride on.

Immortal are all
Your race alone
Would black-ball—
Your kindred that crawl.
Why give them a stone?

When did you pass
On the prototype lift—
Across the morass—
Over the marge of the mortal?
Where found you the isolate gift
Of a spirit-bright garner?
What made you the only immortal—
Sending your mother back to Nirvana?
Fierce is the jungle chase!
Fierce is your race!
The wave of the cave man
Yet throbs in your clan.
Know ye that all are immortal
From prototype up.
No creature is made
To sink down in the cup.

Peace is a lull that is brooding a war!—
Peace is a Proteus arming the maskers.
Equal the justice the eon's allot—
To the long ago:—to the now; and the on.
A world without fight is a poppy-pipe league.
A dragon—the land of the Lotus would rouse.
Bludgeon of cave man:—
Sorcery steel of the Camelot fairy:—
Roll of brown rifle:—Machine-gun tattoo:—
Hit the same key on the organ's—where-to?
Choke-damp of Pandora—a-drift in the dark—
'And the winds of peace are poison!
In the reek—hear the fog-bells toll!
In the masquerade go czars as saints.
The sword is the lift of a spirit hope:—
Its gleam shall not pale round spirals of stars.

Stately and tall is the Linden—
Queen of the trees,—
Wise with the welkin-ken—
Loved by the wing-sweet bees
That round it fly.
Fair and sweet am I.
The cavern blood
Tints red my bud.
Each leaf apart
Is a loyal heart.

A sprig of the Linden tree
Shall be your fleur-de-lis:—
The passion dart
Of the budding Lime—
Bright with the Hero's crime.

Crave not wealth:—
Revel in health.
Bend beside the stricken:—
Try their hearts to quicken.
Heark to the voicing glees
That blow from far-off seas.
The wafts on the ether that bring you—
Out of the branches that swing you,—
Tell the old story to trees.

True is the story of Elfin and Dryad
The legends romantic have wired.
On the boom now afloat
The Dryads shall vote.
I am your Fairy
From the tree-top airy.
My gift is staunch pluck.
I charm you with luck.

Here's a deep health to thee—
In the Dragon's flagon—
From the Linden tree.

I could not waltz to that violin:—
It got me pretty nigh-all-in.

If she sticks to her tenet
She'll spout in the senate.
It wasn't a wind that blew
Out of a tree in Kalamazoo:—
For there the votes get whirls
That dizzy the girls.
The count is a kid,
And the ballots are hid
In a dicing game—
So they can't take aim.
They shake the votes
And roll the goats,—
Till in Kalamazoo
The tally-may-skew.
Its a moonshine brew—
Where they skim the stew
For a bubbling crew
To blow the—revenue.
Burr-Oaks are inspired:
But a Basswood Dryad
Would chant em' tired.
She'll spin for a president
If a non-resident
In the hurdle race goes.
Who knows?

What tag is that on the Basswood bole—
And pinned by a dart through the scroll?

The scrip is the quill of Friar Tuck,
I'll read it just for luck.

MAID MARIAN LOST!

Strayed:—Reward offered.

Saw ye my Mary Ann flit there,
Or where her light foot stayed?
Who spied the gleam of sunny hair
Along the path she strayed?
Ye'l know the face alike the peeps
Of dawn in happy May:—
Her spirit eyes the bell-blue deeps
A-bloom on bank and brae.

Mahap in Sherwood's Oakland tossed
She's sniped by Boy-Scout Dan;
'And in the windy forest lost—
Who then might steal my Ann?
O darksome days that lack the flirt?
Where trend the pilgrim feet?
Too free her heart to feel a hurt:—
Too blithe its kindly beat.

So if ye find an errant maid
With sun-lit hair and eye—
Then fetch my love-light from the glade
Where hide her blushes shy.
And you shall preen
In Lincoln green,—
(And swing for buck
With the Reverend Tuck.)

Coax back the truant's rosy feet—
My Merry-men—I pray;
And ruddy heart-gold's lavish treat
Shall Love's bright ransom pay.
So trill a-down the greenwood May
My lure-horn's mating charm.
She'l know the Outlaw's homing lay:—
The gloaming rush-light psalm.

HIS
ROBIN HOOD
MARK

The mark is an arrow
Shot through the narrow
Flitch of a willow switch.
Rob's bow must be slow
At the span—
If he missed the willowy Ann.
The maid of the hymn
Will I hope—miss Jim.
Mrs. Robin Hood is quite romancy.
Mary A. can out-Nance Nancy.
Ah me! But lovers play tricks
For the smile of an asterix!
If men only knew
That a lass can be true!
And that one bonny girl
In the home-sweet twilight,
Takes the mask off the whirl
In a cabaret high-light!
O, a bungalow hammock
Gets the doe and the bannock!

But hark! Again the Hue!
The stag-hounds bay the view!
Fast tilt the joyance crew—
In green and gold—
In scarlet bold—
Against the leafy bowers
Where blossom flowers!
And one in khaki—
Ahead and larky.

The coiling echos swirl the dells
With mocking eddies
Whose rhyming spread is
A chime of bells.
A-down the glens
They drown the dens.
And lilt-horn spells
And yeoman yells
Ring mad-peal mels:—
Till Sherwood's Druid Oak rebels.

No peep-glass Dryads now—go pranking on the
Idle's yonder bank!
The hounds! The hunter's View-Halloo!
And wild my red-roan's ululu!
Is boar or stag
The royal swag
The bloodhounds tag?
Does spear or whinyard
Spill his vineyard?
Who shreds the shag?
Who's in? It's *him!*
You *win!* O *Jim!*

Here winds the briming tide to breast!
The tossing lion face is beaming:—
I stroke the cool immortal crest:—
And lo—my gallop all was dreaming!

Who saw my Chestnut's satin vest,
Or heard his curb-chain tinkle?
Did dawn-crow zest shy off his jest
And speed the white feet's twinkle?

O Barb of No-land's mystic shore—
Your starry eyes grow dim with morning:—
The East but glowed:—
The cock but crowed:—in dreams of yore;
And swift the elfin heart took warning.
From morn of Merry England:—
O Jack of the Swing-band—
Flit to the Pix-winged strand.
But with the jocund train
That hunt from Castle-Airy—
Where nod-folk loose the rein,
A roan of mine will tarry:—
Or lark the range of the Linden gleams
With rovers old and storied;—
And nibble by the pasture streams
On blue-grass hills pictorial.
He'll call and look
A-yont the brook
Until the forest warden
Lilts the rouse from cradle-dreams
In woods across the Jordan.

Come Trix!
And quit that mix!
You get in trim
And go with—Jim.
Now keep away from Fleethart's flings!
You'll get a crimp—
And *you* will limp.
Quit you sweetheart! You tear my—things.
O Nancy! You *were* the belle
Last night; and you just looked swell!
Of all the—togs I have ever seen
I envy you that sea-foam green.
Gay old Fleethart! You just flew!
Here's a lump of sugar for *you*.
Now mind you Trix what you are about.

* * * * *

I am ready Captain Abbot.

MAGDALENA---A PICTURE

In the picture the face is inclined, and the eyes
droop.

Where the peering eyes of mortals
May not haunt the trysting place :
Swung within its viewless portals
Hides an exile's spellful face.

On the canvass softly cluster
Ruffled waves of sunny hair ;
And their golden rippled lustre
Lights the beauty pictured there.

Faultless curves the profile tracing :
Sculptured neck and rounded chin :
Penciled lights the shadows chasing :—
Might an artist lover win.

Rich the sparkling life-wine flushes
Where the cheeks bright roses creep ;
And with riper color brushes
Lips that Eros' secret keep.

But the long-lashed eyelid's veiling
Shrouds the glance's sweet desire.
Like the chastened marble—paling
Some pure statute's earthy fire.

Who shall paint the wistful beaming
Quenched beneath the masking shy?
Who shall track the wilds of dreaming—
Under pensive downcast eye?

Were the mystic fancies dimming
Left from girlhood's happy past,
And the tidal heart-wave brimming
Through a woman's soul at last?

Where the shadowy fringing lashes
Deep the coying spirit screen—
Slumber not revealing flashes,—
Heart illuming—Magdalene?

Still the sun-gold downward trailing
Twinkles on the wavy tress,
But the eyelid's dreamy veiling
Fails the painter's wistfulness.

There in Eden's apple-morning
Still the face illusive seems:
As the baffling Lisa's, dawning
On Da Vinci's easel dreams.

Ah,—the cunning master's meaning:—
Who can fathom woman's heart?
Were her spirit o'er us leaning,
Vanquished both were song and art.

So the Mage's touch has limed it;
And the easel-flower will bloom
Where the blight has never dimmed it,—
In a heart-warm garden room.

REMINISCE

On the hilltop loomed the tenting,
And the dingle down below,
Faint the winter Southwind scenting,
Rimmed the bending river's flow.
Once the sandy camp path wending
While the mellow bugles played,—
Blithe the revel mess call sending,—
Wide a canvass portal swayed.
In I peered for chuck and brimmer:
But in Beauty's eyrie snared,—
While the candle glims grew dimmer,—
Bright beguiling glances dared.
Then like faces kenned in vision
When the wild-winged fancies rise
On the reverie shores Elysian,
Soon I felt more spellful eyes.
Magnet lights in shadows perking,
Lit the deeps behind their gaze:—
Still those elfin lamps are lurking
In Romance's twilight haze.
Where the camp-fire's sly caresses
Sliding up in foxy play,
Twinkled in the darkling tresses,—
Back was turned a sunny ray.
Gone the evening's light and shading:
But the brown hair's dark and bright,
With its penciled wave unfading,
Frames a picture on the night.

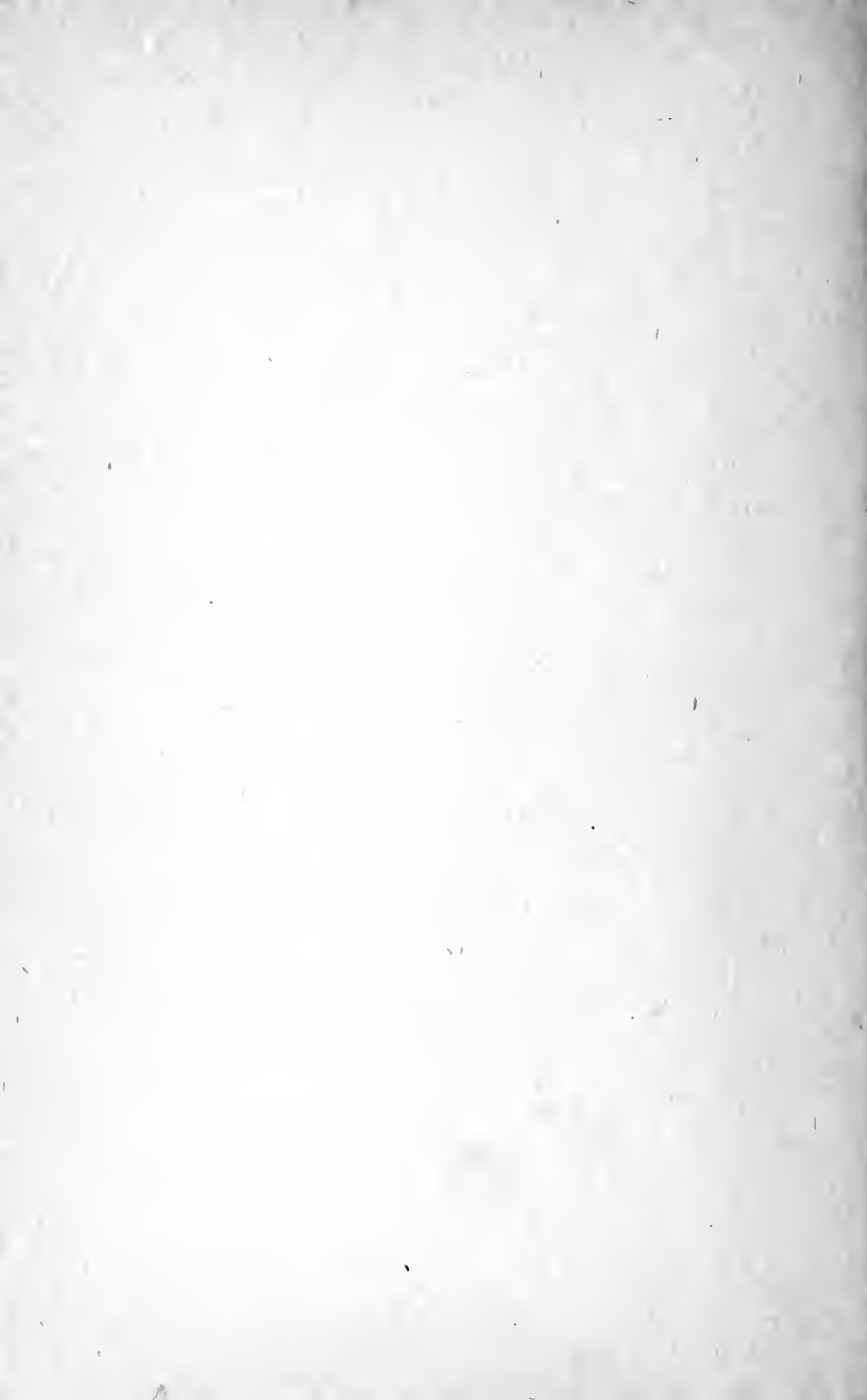
Still the red lip's music—falling
In its liquid cadenced bars—
Mocks in dreams with phantom calling;
And those eyes like gloaming stars,
Tryst the hours with strange alluring.
Lowly lie the rueful tents:
Early lapsed their kind immuring:
Ghostly moth-things prowl the rents.
But the fire-fly face—reluming
In its haunting beauty—smiles
Through the Southland's fitful glooming,
From the shadow laden Isles.

So some rainbow whim of mortals
Fading from espial fleets;
Though the heart its prison portals
With a heyday rhythm beats.
Thus some earthland apparition
Once its flitting bounty lends,—
Then in dreams that lull volition
From a misty casement bends.
And the spirit's lost ideal
That the lowly earth denies,
Beckons out beyond the real—
Where the viewless kingdom lies.
Nearer to its mystic border
Souls in exile often dwell:—
Stronger 'gainst its spectral warder
Than their mortal senses tell.

Now the camp-fire elves are banished
To a cloudy-tented park.
Long have lass and legion vanished

Where the bugle echoes lark.
Curtain-drop on canvass mansions
Dims the dream of bygone time.
Falling faint the cornet chansons
Float but wildered waifs of rhyme.







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